



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Big Piney
Ranger District

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Hector, AR 72843
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Jasper, AR 72641
870-446-5122
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File Code: 1950

Date: May 5, 2014

Dear Interested Party,

The Three Knob Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Big Piney Ranger District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests is available for your review and comments. The EA can be found online at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/osfnf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5212180> or by contacting the District Offices in Jasper or Hector. The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to pre-decisional objection process at 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

The project area is approximately eight miles north of the town of Dover. Portions of the project are on both sides of State Highway 7 between the Broomfield and Granny's Gap roads and include the Three Knob Mountain. The rest of the project area is west of Big Piney Creek from the National Forest proclamation boundary on the south up to Phillips Ford (point where FS Road # 1802 crosses Big Piney Creek). The west boundary is the Pilot Rock Road (FS Road # 1800) from the south until it intersects with FS Road # 1802, from that point the west boundary is Trace Creek (a tributary which enters Big Piney Creek just upstream from Phillips Ford). The project area is in western Pope and eastern Johnson counties. The Proposed Action, a No Action and a No Herbicide Alternative were analyzed in the EA. I have identified the Proposed Action as my preferred action.

The specific activities proposed include restoration of native forest types, improvements to vegetation, wildlife habitat, road access and recreational opportunities.

Although a preferred action has been identified, my final decision on which action to implement has not been made. You can help me in making this decision by providing comments on the EA. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in Russellville's *The Courier*. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments §218.2 regarding the proposed project or activity during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection §218.24(b)(6). For issues to be raised in objections, they must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to submit written comments on a proposed project or activity. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure that their comments are received in a timely manner. Written comment(s) must be submitted to Timothy E. Jones, Big Piney Ranger District, 12,000 SR 27 Hector, AR 72843. Verbal or hand-delivered written comments must be received during our normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to

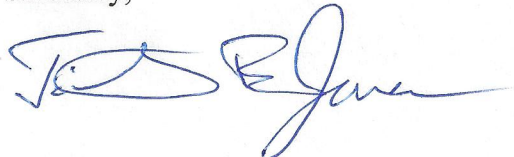


4:30 p.m., Mon-Fri. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx) to: comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis-bayou@fs.fed.us. This project decision could be objected if public comments are received (36 CFR 218). For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request §218.24(b)(8). Please state "Three Knob Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

The Draft EA is being reviewed both internally and externally during this 3- day period. So, it can be expected that the Final EA will have minor changes which will not affect the analysis or the results of the assessment, but serve to clarify and enhance the disclosure of effects.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mike Mulford at the District Ranger's Office in Jasper, Arkansas at 870-446-2228 extension 5136.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. E. Jones", written over a horizontal line.

TIMOTHY E. JONES
District Ranger